CLAIM AMENDMENTS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the

application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (original). A method of defining an exchange-traded fund, which comprises:

searching for publicly traded securities and a history of dividend yields associated

with the respective securities;

sorting the securities relative to an amount of the associated dividend yields, and

rating the securities based on the associated dividend yields;

placing a plurality of the securities into the exchange-traded fund and weighting the

individual securities within the exchange-traded fund in accordance with the

associated dividend yields; and

offering for sale shares in the exchange-traded fund.

Claim 2 (original). The method according to claim 1, wherein the searching step

comprises also searching for a price-earnings ratio associated with the respective

securities, and weighting the respective securities in the exchange-traded fund with

the price-earnings ratio and the amount of the associated dividend yields.

Claim 3 (original). A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing the method according to claim 1.

Claim 4 (original). A computer programmed to perform the method according to claim 1.

Claim 5 (currently amended). A virtual securities broker for assisting a customer in generating and purchasing a dividend-weighted fund instrument from a merchant, comprising:

a database containing customer information with identification and preferences related to the customer;

a client system for prompting the customer to ~~select a predefined set of dividend-yielding securities or to input parameters for a new search defining a new set of dividend-yielding securities~~ either select a predefined query specifying search parameters or to input the search parameters, the search parameters including a dividend yield;

a server system programmed to search, via the Internet, ~~a current state of the predefined set of dividend-yielding securities or within the parameters entered in said client system by the customer~~ for securities satisfying the search parameters and to transmit a search result identifying the securities satisfying the search parameters to said client system; and

a purchase processing system, connected to said server system and adapted to receive a purchase order from the customer via said client system, for ~~the dividend-yielding securities~~ at least some of the securities satisfying the search parameters and to fill the purchase order.

Claim 6 (currently amended). The virtual securities broker according to claim 5, wherein ~~said server system is configured to search for stocks including a stock price and a history of dividend distributions,~~ said client system is configured to display to the customer a percentage dividend yield defined by a percentage ratio of past dividend distribution over a given period of time relative to the price of the security.

Claim 7 (currently amended). A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for implementing the virtual securities broker according to claim [4] 5.

Claim 8 (original). In an electronic commerce system having a computer system configured to search for securities, a history of dividend yields associated with the respective securities, and price-earnings ratios associated with the respective securities, a method of generating and offering for sale an exchange-traded fund, which comprises:

upon receiving an initiation request from a customer, checking a database containing customer information with identification and preferences related to the customer;

prompting the customer to select a predefined set of dividend-yielding securities or to input parameters for a new search defining a new set of dividend-yielding securities;

searching for securities matching the parameters associated with the set of dividend-yielding securities, placing a plurality of the securities into the exchange-traded fund, weighting the individual securities within the exchange-traded fund in accordance with the associated dividend yields, and rating the securities based on an amount of the associated dividend yields; and

offering for sale shares in the exchange-traded fund.

Claim 9 (original). The method according to claim 8, wherein the searching step comprises also searching for a price-earnings ratio associated with the respective securities, and weighting the respective securities in the exchange-traded fund with the price-earnings ratio and the amount of the associated dividend yields.

Claim 10 (currently amended). A method of placing an order in a securities-trading system having a server system connected in a network and a client system connected to the server system, which comprises:

under control of the client system, prompting a user for input selecting from available securities with a history of dividend distribution, the input specifying search parameters including a dividend yield;

under control of the server system, searching the network for securities matching the ~~user's~~ search parameters and transmitting search results to the client system;

under control of the client system, displaying the search results to the user and prompting the user for further action, the further action including further input for a new search and placing a purchase order for a security or a collection of securities having a history of dividend distribution satisfying the ~~user's~~ search parameters.

Claim 11 (currently amended). The method according to claim 10, ~~which comprises prompting the user for input selecting either a predefined selection of dividend-yielding securities or a specific set of parameters for defining a new selection~~ <u>wherein the input selects either a predefined set of the search parameters or is a newly entered set of the search parameters</u>.

Claim 12 (currently amended). The method according to claim 10, wherein the ~~specific set of parameters includes a percentage yield~~ <u>dividend yield is</u> defined by a percentage ratio of past dividend distribution over a given period of time relative to a price of the security.

Claim 13 (original). A computer system interconnected and programmed to perform the method according to claim 10.

Claim 14 (original). A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for implementing the method according to claim 10.

Claim 15 (new). The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of rating the securities is performed by rating the securities based solely on the associated dividend yields.